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End of the Vietnam War

The whole world is breathing a sigh of relief at the ending of the war in Vietnam. The war had become a festering sore in the body politic of mankind. All the dangers inherent in war—not only the destruction of people and property in the countries directly clashing in it, but the constant threat of escalation to global and nuclear proportions, indirect involvement in warfare by more than one super-power with rivalry even among those championing the same side, exacerbation of political animosities between countries sympathetically aligned with opposite sides, the unleashing of brutalities, the unsettlement or ruin of whole populations in town and country, the disintegration of families, institutions and governments—were all present in this war in an obscure, tiny little country in Asia. And so, as one commentator put it, 'it is not that something wonderful has happened; it is more a feeling that something terrible has finally ended'.

The way the Vietnam War was brought to an end is the second major instance—the first being the dismemberment of Pakistan—of a big shift in both the theories of political processes and in the practice of diplomacy. Concepts such as those of two major camps, a third world, inveterate oppositions and 'internal affairs' have had to be given up and, instead, the ruthless logic of realism and the over-riding of the claims of principalities by those of the people have led to the equally momentous and welcome liberation of Bangladesh and the settlement in Vietnam. In the process we have heard about such unconventional international proceedings as 'ping-pong diplomacy' and the almost instant recognition by several countries of the overthrow of a tyrant by one half of a nation with the military help of a neighbour.

Thus politics is no longer to be regarded as a codification of fixed principles and of laws which have been deduced from the study of courses of events and the pursuit of policies in the political evolution and functioning of countries with varying goals, backgrounds and experiences. We should, perhaps, speak hereafter of 'situational' study of politics just as we have been speaking of 'situational ethics'. One also wonders whether any forecasts at all of political developments or debacles can hereafter be made when diplomacy has become quite complicated and inscrutable, as when successfully establishing rapport with two rival super-powers at the same time and tying both of them up, as it were, while savagely mauling a friend of both into agreement to end a war and sign a treaty.

Whereas the ways in which peace and freedom have been secured in Vietnam and Bangladesh have been quick and unorthodox, to say the least, the line of action of the political *pundits* of the W.C.C. has been little more than 'resolutionary'. On the one hand they have tended to see all political conflicts only as black and white, with all the villainy on the one side. While they were over-critical of the engagement of the U.S. in the Vietnam War they were equally blind to, or at least silent about, atrocities by the other side, about which the men on that side could not speak with even a thousandth part of the freedom with which Americans could speak about the My Lai massacre or about what were described as Nixon's crimes against humanity. Nixon certainly has not been a dove out to achieve the peace of the world by playing a selfless or sacrificial role. But then it must now be seen that he was also not a hawk interested only in drawing the blood of the communists anywhere in the world. I think it would be a fair comment to say that all the statements and appeals issued under W.C.C. auspices neither influenced Nixon

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nor could have been seen by him as being relevant to the kind of diplomatic approach to the question of Vietnam that he was making.

The officials of the W.C.C. and members of its committees would appear to have been too ready to issue statements and not to have done enough of lobbying for influencing political action. Also, one observes a tendency on the part of experts of the different organizations of the W.C.C. and of Conferences, Churches and Christian Unions, whether in politics, science or industry, to put far greater emphasis on what they—a tiny minority within the Church consisting largely of men and women not directly engaged in these fields—will say or do than on getting Christians, actually involved in them to learn and discharge their responsibility as Christians in any of these segments of the world. Those who are concerned with the cause of the vocation of the Christian in every walk of life would do well to rethink their programmes and 'strategy', asking themselves whether they should follow the much easier and more exciting way of resorting to programmes of action themselves or the much more difficult and missionary one of helping members of the Churches the world over to discover the implications of being Christians and members of trades and professions. In other words, should the W.C.C. (perhaps like to the Vatican) have ministries on behalf of all the Churches or help the Churches to undertake ministries.

However, whether peace has come the way our Christian experts anticipated or not and whether there was really any Christian contribution to its achievement apart from the sincere prayers of the devout or not, we must be thankful to God for the cessation of hostilities any where in the world and continue to work and pray for the end to all wars, shooting or cold, and to all the evils and injustices that give rise to them.

CHRISTIANS AND THE CINEMA

Perhaps the attitudes of different groups of Christians to the Cinema is as good an index of the concepts of piety among them as anything else. At one extreme we have Christians—not merely in the so-called sects, but in the historical churches as well—for whom the Cinema is of the devil and should be absolute taboo, for the Christian anyway. They have made an eleventh commandment against it, adding to it other prohibitions, too, such as that against smoking. At the other extreme we have Christians who regard the cinema as a form of amusement that belongs to a 'secular' area of life where religion cannot intrude and where they need not behave differently from those who do not share their faith. Between these two extremes we have attitudes of greater or lesser tolerance or discrimination such as that of bringing an abstention from it under a rule of life for oneself or trying to discriminate between films in order to avoid the unedifying ones.

Most of the groups which regard secular films as sinful would still use the cinematographic art for religious propaganda or for the 'deepening of the spiritual life'. Some of them have a correct appreciation of the telling effect of visual mass media and it must be admitted that they are usually up to date with technique. But they draw a line between the sacred and the secular. Quite a large number of Christians who are opposed to secular films, however, are taken in by advertised Biblical or Christian themes or even labels such as *Creation* and *The Ten Commandments* which become all the greater box office draws for the subtler forms of 'sexploitation' or other sensual aspects of films.

The cinema has not only come to stay, but to stay as a powerful, if uncoercive, influence on the lives of individuals and communities. The abstention even of large numbers of Christians from it would only mean their abandonment of a sector of life for the sake of what they believe is their own spiritual safety. In effect this abandonment is disowning of responsibility for guidance, purification and action for creativeness and reform in one of the more important fields of life. It would mean that these Christians have no concern for the millions of their fellowmen who, in their opinion, are going the primrose path to perdition and that they are content to have their own souls delivered. It would also mean that they are either blind or indifferent to the worsening trends in the exploitation of sex and sensationalism in the cinema and to the pervading evil influences of such trends in society at large and the consequent degradation of the moral tone of society as a whole.

Against this background of general Christian indifference and withdrawal it is heartening to find at least some Christian groups, papers and individuals taking both a realistic and responsible attitude to the cinema. They have several difficult tasks. In the first place they have to think out how the cinema may be used as a medium for wholesome entertain-

ment and enrichment of experience and saved from prostitution for commercial ends. No producer would be willing to make 'clean' films unless they would also be box office attractions. So this task of reform cannot be attempted except by demonstrating, or persuading producers who accept this view to demonstrate, how films can be made both harmless and popular. Secondly, they have to try to explore the ways in which film-goers in general may be educated in the appreciation of the real values and beauties of films so that they may exercise a proper choice of films they would see and not succumb to the mania for the sensual even after making such a selection. Finally they have the responsibility also to give practical guidance to particular groups they are directly concerned with so that they will learn to get legitimate and sound entertainment and avoid the evil effects that the cinema has on those who develop a craving for the sordid and the carnal.

The problems of the right use of the cinema are problems of society and such they must be taken up as problems the church must be concerned for. The realisation of such a responsibility has led to action for reform, study and guidance by certain Christian groups and individuals. A writer by name James M. Wall has written a book on *Church and Cinema* and a review of it has appeared in one of the Christian papers in South India. Quite a few Christian periodicals now run a film feature in each issue. It is time that we, too, in our Church concerned ourselves with what, according to James M. Wall, is 'an art form and a cultural force which can perform a renewing function in our society'. As a step towards stimulating thought on the cinema and Christian responsibility for it the *Churchman* offers in this issue a few articles written by Christians who take both the cinema and the Christian concern for it seriously. Readers and others are invited to make a debate out of points or views expressed in them which they would like to add to, comment on or contradict.

DEVOTIONAL

A New Humanity in Christ*

J. LYCIAS JOEL, *Christian College, Martandam*

It is a new year for all of us in the C.S.I., whether it is the first or the fortieth. Has the Bible anything to say to us?

New is certainly one of the greatest words of the Bible's. In the Old Testament, it often appears in the Psalms: 'I will sing a new song to the Lord', 'He has put a new song in my mouth'. The prophets in the Old Testament represent God as saying, 'I am going to do a new thing' or 'I will call you by a new name' and even 'I create a new heaven and a new earth'. Jeremiah also, a little before the exile, promises 'a new covenant', deeper and stronger than the covenant made on Sinai which was the foundation of all religion in Israel. And during the exile, Ezekiel speaks often of 'a new heart' or 'a new spirit' to be bestowed by God, whose spirit or breath can give life even to dry bones. The preacher, 'Ecclesiastes', strikes an alien note when he says, 'What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun'. But when Jesus comes, the people at once say that his teaching is 'new' and he declares himself that it is like new wine which must be

put into new wineskins—or the skins and the wines will both be lost.

We discover Paul's sincerity of purpose and faithfulness in Christ, his communion with God, his devotion to the duty of charity, his spiritual strength and the sufferings he has undergone for spreading the Gospel through his various epistles like the one to the Corinthians. We, as Christians, are called upon to hold aloft the torch which Paul has flashed and carry it forward together in Christ. All our efforts to introduce and enforce the New Humanity will be in vain if the efforts are not rooted in love, faith, conviction and sincerity of purpose through Christ. And Paul strikes the same notes of the preacher, Ecclesiastes, many times. The Christian must serve God 'in newness of life' or in 'a new path of life' or 'a new way'. Paul sees with ever fresh surprise how Jew and Gentile, the old irreconcilables, are being made 'one new man' by God through Christ; it is as great a miracle as the Resurrection itself. And this miracle, great as it is, is repeated in the life of every Christian, a second creation; he says: 'when if anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world'.

* In place of a Lenten meditation on the Fall which a Presbyter was requested to write on, but which he chose to illustrate, rather than expound, by not replying to repeated requests!—Ed.

the old order has gone, and a new order had already begun'. Or in another version, 'When anyone is united with Christ, he is a new creature, his old life is over, a new life has already begun'.

The people of Athens, with few exceptions, fail to respond to the preaching of Paul. They recognize that his teaching is new as the synagogues in Capernaum and Nazareth realized the teaching of Christ to be new. But they do not take it in, because, as Luke tells us drily, 'they had leisure for nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing' so that, after the first few minutes or hours, Paul's message becomes one more old thing in its turn.

How are we to grasp the newness of the New Humanity in this New Year? How are we to enjoy the freedom, dynamism and rationality which are the fruits of newness? It is possible through faith, love, conviction, devotion and strength which we get from and enjoy through Christ. Renewal is the answer. And, it is the door to enter the newness in Christ. Renewal must be, then, the cause and the consequence of such a newness. And, it must be complete and continuous. Of course, there must be intervals. But, they should be contrasted from the rest. Renewal does not come to sleepy people. But it comes only when we apply ourselves, notice and respond to the new ways which open up before us unexpectedly. Renewal comes to those who respond and who are awake. We mustn't be half-relaxed and half-braced people.

Renewal must cover the whole life. It isn't like a coat of fresh paint slapped on the outside; it is an activity, a life that wells up from the bottom and cleanses all that is within reach. It is continuous. It does not work by fits and starts, suddenly appearing when we are in the right mood and circumstances are propitious. It is original, constant and alive—a cause and an effect. 'Then he sat on the throne and said, "Behold, I am making all things new".' That is the new English Bible. In the older versions he says, 'I make all things new', almost as if he were to change things round or turn them over, and then to go away and leave them to themselves again—as if it were some periodical spring-cleaning. 'I am making all things new'. He goes on making them new. 'And if we are to have a part in this divine activity,' unrelenting and silent as light' it must be the love of life that draws us on, not a horror of death that drives us away from the things we know. It isn't just being weary of the present, will it seem to us that anything different must be better; it is being led forward with open eyes by hope. It is activity, purposeful and meaningful, not a series of reactions; not just witches and fidgets which neither work nor rest but the deadly enemy of both; not the tossings and turnings of a sleepless man in bed; but the steady rhythmical movement of a man going toward a clear and correct destination.

Renewal, if it is to do any good and to lead to newness in Christ must be, then, complete and continuous. And at least as a rule it must be the work of several people, or many all making up a team, all members or limbs of one living body, that is Christ. A particular man may, in the

mystery of God's providence, be called to stand for a time alone, as Athanasius stood against the world. But God doesn't choose to have many solitary saints or to keep them solitary for long. Most of us will be missing our vocation or doing injustice to our mission—introducing and enforcing the New Humanity in Christ—if we do not co-operate harmoniously with other people. We all belong by nature, whether we work or play, to many different families and the man who is thinking only of what he can get out of them for himself is blind or deaf. Such a man cannot see or hear the new Humanity. For the essence of the coming of the New Humanity is to serve others without counting the cause and the hope of the New Humanity is to be more concerned about loving than being loved, serving than being served and giving than getting without 'looking on his own things'.

Renewal calls for working together. It is only when a group of people are doing something together and doing it well because it interests them, that their life can be renewed one by one and day by day so that they can reach newness. Renewal must be according to the will of God or it won't be renewal but only change. Change perhaps isn't always a good thing but changelessness is always bad. This is the message and the blessing of the New Humanity in Christ. Only the creator can create anew. Renewal and newness is God's work which he does in his own time. One of the fruits of faith in God, one in which its true nature is to be seen, must always be patience. For we knew that patience leads to hope, and hope to experience and experience once again to patience and hope in and for the New Humanity and newness in Christ. Inasmuch as we try to be the servants of God, to seek goodness and joy and hope in Him, not in ourselves, through us and in us, His will is done. That is the reason why newness in Christ is earned and enjoyed only when we wait patiently for His will and only when our life is rooted in him through faith in Christ.

All things are of God who by reconciling us to himself with Jesus Christ has made us new in him. And we are ordained to go together in the same newness carrying the mission of reconciliation.

God doesn't impute our aims unto us but reconciles the world unto himself by sending his only begotten son, Christ, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation and its mission.

Reconciliation and renewal should go hand in hand. One does not depend on the other as one does not wait for the other. By reconciling we get renewed and by renewal we get reconciled. We are called upon to be Ambassadors of God and our credentials are renewal and reconciliation.

To make us new and free, Christ was made sinful though he didn't know sin. This is a case of a righteous man dying for the sake of the unrighteous and ungodly. Such an adventure involves sacrifices. Thus he renewed us by killing himself at the Cross. Our renewal must be also one of sacrifice. We have to swallow what we do not like for the renewal of others and for our reconciliation with others. Let this be our motto in this New Year: 'to witness for the New Humanity in Christ'.

We may build the house, but he (Christ) alone converts it into a home. We organise programmes, but he alone can inject power into them.

—S. L. PARMAR: *Lift up Your Eyes.*

* * * * *

We equate our failure (with God's failure) and sink into a spiritual coma.

—S. L. PARMAR: *Lift up Your Eyes.*

The Christian Understanding of Politics

DAVID C. GALLUP, *Arasaradi, Madurai*

From beginning to end the Bible is political. Christian theology, because it is a response to scripture and the experience of Jesus Christ, has political implications.

I

The Bible is political in that it relates men's experiences of God-with-us in history. The prophets do not teach us *about* God; they do not speculate like Greeks on God as Being. Instead, we are told what God is *doing*; we know him in his action. For Isaiah the chief sin of Israel was their blindness to the activity of God in contemporary events. It has been suggested by Bas Wielenga in Bangalore that the writers of the first chapters of Genesis were being political: he who wrote the majestic litany of creation in Genesis, chapter one, wrote to encourage political prisoners in Babylonia not to succumb to fatalism but still to trust and hope for change; the writer of the story of man's fall leading to the tower of Babel was warning the kings of Israel and Judah to avoid the pitfalls of hubris and monarchical arrogance.

II

Above all, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is for us inescapably political. Let us see why.

First, the Gospel is a promise about the ultimate outcome of the human enterprise and each of our involvements in it. Our theological heritage, Pauline, Lutheran and Calvinistic, has never let us forget, at least not for long, the difference between promise and law. Law says, 'If . . . then . . .' The then clause offers a future of some sort. That future depends on the past: 'If'. But promise reverses this; it says, 'Because . . . therefore . . .'. The future is offered unconditionally. This is what happens in the biblical idea of forgiveness. The gospel story of Jesus Christ properly told is a promise of what we can expect because Jesus lives.

That he lives is basic. As the incarnation of God's love, Jesus lived to bring hope to his brothers. But the Gospel story of Jesus Christ says that he is risen from the dead. That means, among other things, that the reality we identify with Christ is not only of the past, but is also anticipated for the future. If death is behind him, his is an eschatological promise: henceforth nothing can limit the scope of his love. His is a universal promise; it applies to all men. His is an invincible promise; Jesus' self-giving love will ultimately prevail.

III

Of course, to speak of the triumph of Jesus' love is an abstraction. But the eschatological promise is never made abstractly. That promise of the Gospel is always an affirmation of each person in his own peculiar, unique situation. The promise is always made by someone to someone, and each 'someone' already contains his own promises, threats, hopes and fears which direct his life. As a result, there is a mutual interpretation when the Gospel promise is related to the multitude of other attitudes and concerns motivating the hearer. For example: in a situation where a person's primary efforts and thoughts must always be about his next meal, the Promise may take the form of the final Great Banquet. On the other hand, 'with the belly full and the mind empty', the Promise may be interpreted as the hope for the Beatific Vision,

when one will see reality as it is. Consequently, there will be necessarily many differing hopes, visions, 'eschatologies'.

Nevertheless, one factor remains constant: human life is communal. All our different hopes and fears interrelate. Thus our eschatologies will inevitably be political, communal, social. Biblically, think of all the diverse longings that are summed up in the eschatologically significant concept of 'Israel'. Likewise, 'Kingdom of God' holds in itself many forms of promise—quite different for the Publican and the Sinner, for revived Lazarus and the Rich Young Ruler.

IV

But we have only shown how the receivers may interpret (and perhaps distort) the promise. While the eschatological promise, Jesus, does interpret himself in terms of present hopes and fears, he also interprets those hopes and fears in terms of himself, so that our hopes and fears are transformed.

First, we see our hopes as possibilities. That is, if Jesus is (if the Promise is true), what we are struggling for today may actually come true. Why? Because, above all the other factors *pro* and *con* there is one other factor upon which we can count: God, his purpose, his promise. Looking at all the factors working against economic justice for developing nations, we still say, 'It may be possible'. We will defy pessimistic 'reality' because of the Resurrection!

Second, when Jesus interprets our hopes, he makes them concrete. An example: education and security for our children is the hope by which many of us live in S. India. We often interpret that in terms of the increasingly worthless university degrees. Jesus interprets this hope in terms of creating conditions of learning which will encourage true growth in personality, character and wisdom. We are encouraged to work for an educational revolution. Another example: We often interpret economic advancement in terms of more steel mills and cement factories. Whereas Jesus calls us to a radical restructuring of society, because under present possibilities only a small group benefits from the mills and factories which are turning out things to be used by the affluent while the masses remain poor. In the impossible possibility of hope, we can struggle on for a more just society.

The resurrection frees us to a way of living out our hopes in love.

V

In our day, because of the involvement of many people in revolutionary struggles, Christians are becoming more aware of the political implications of even the most basic doctrines and the importance of practising what we preach. We have been led to realize the wickedness of the status quo and to confess that religion has usually been employed to justify it! It is an indication of the perverseness of men that this has been true of Christianity; and it is an indication of the persistence of the Holy Spirit that in our day we are discovering that the Gospel is a promise of liberation and change. If Romans 5:1 was a motto for the Protestant Reformation in Luther's day, Luke 4:18 has become the motto for our day.

Indian Christians like S. L. Parmar and the late E. V. Matthew are challenging us to acknowledge the political

bias inherent in the Gospel and to take a consciously ideological stance, forswearing pretensions of Christian unity or 'co-operation' which actually conceal conflicts of interests. The Gospel is biased. It favours the dispossessed.

There has been a rediscovery of contextual or involvement theology, which is another way of saying that people never 'do theology' in a vacuum. An example of this is the second look people are taking at Karl Barth's so-called 'pure theology,' which was hammered out on the anvil of socialist activity and tested in the fires of fascism. Barthian theology was not aloof and detached; it tried to interpret in biblical categories the contemporary inescapable experience of social reality with its demand for change. The uncompromised Gospel cannot help being political and cannot help but call for a choice between oppressors and the oppressed.

VI

Sometimes 'right theology' can be used, consciously or not, for wrong ends. The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa supplies the most shocking example in our day. A further example which applies closer to home is the following: Christian theology stressed the importance of the individual. Bourgeois Christian liberalism has claimed to protect individual freedom and work for social justice. But it failed, in spite of its theology, to make a radical, critical analysis of how society is operating. We must learn from the Marxists at this point! It has been pointed out that most Christian social ethics discuss the roles and responsibilities of individuals and governments, but have avoided critiques of economic power, private ownership of the means of production, class struggles, etc.

Bas Wielenga has called to our attention one Richard Wilhelm who in China opposed baptism as an instrument for 'saving' individuals from the masses. He saw the practice as being more consonant with western imperialism than with Christ. Have we given any serious thought to

the idea of corporate salvation? Has our easy emphasis of the individual helped us to avoid the more difficult task of addressing our faith against the structures and systems of unredeemed society? Can anyone ever be saved apart from his brethren?

VII

Even our spiritualism may hide from us the down to earth relevance of the Gospel. By ranking spiritual values at the top of a hierarchical value system, our theology can be unbiblical. We know that the body-soul dichotomy is Greek and Hindu, not Hebrew! Let us read our Bibles again, this time without over-spiritualizing the manna in Exodus or the actual bread that was given the five-thousand.

The Christian understanding of human sinfulness keeps us from absolutizing our passing ideologies. But it must not be used as a counsel of despair. For there is forgiveness and hope in Christ who by his resurrection frees us to do what we really know needs to be done, frees us from self-righteousness, and frees us from worry about defeat. We can be realistic about the power of evil and be armed to resist it.

VIII

In summary:

The Bible narrative speaks through communal, social, political categories. God is Emmanuel in historic action.

The Gospel is eschatological and political. It holds out a Promise about our ultimate destiny. It comes to us in our human community and is addressed to our motivating hopes and fears.

Not always have we practised what we preach; but we are becoming aware of the political implications of our theology.

The Gospel frees us from inhibitions, for while it points up human limitations, it brings us hope through the Resurrection Promise.

The Cinema in the Life of Man Today

E. W. P. THOMAS,* *Tiruchirapalli*

The cinema is a force to reckon with in the life of man today. It is a world by itself. Towards it are directed the energies of a large number of producers, directors, writers, actors, musicians, photographers and a variety of specialist workers. In Tamil Nadu 202 films were produced in 1970-71, 10 crores of rupees collected as Entertainment Tax and 25 to 27 crores as box office returns. When the 750 cinemas in Maharashtra were closed some time ago, owing to a deadlock between the Cinema Producer Association and the Government of Maharashtra, over the raise in E.T., newspaper reports showed that one million cinema-goers were deprived of their sole entertainment, and the Government lost Rs. 2.5 lakhs a day. Numerous other industries felt the pinch too: the presses which turn out the tickets, the Electricity Board which supplies the current, cinema employees, the advertising agencies and newspapers. The police feared that the crowds who had been deprived of the pleasure of the screen would take to rioting—as an alternative form of entertainment! If this is the impact of the motion picture on a part of India, how colossal must be its force in the world as a whole today!

To the cinema world of production there is a corresponding and an even much greater world of spectators who, more or less consciously and effectively, receive from the former a shaping impact on their development, their ideas, feelings and, not rarely, their way of life. The Gargantuan thirst the present-day society has for the cinema, judging by the billions that crowd the cinema houses, further underlines the power of appeal of the cinema. As early as 1954, the number of cinemagoers for the world was 12,000 million. Today's figure must be in the proportion of geometric progression.

Then there is that huge bulk of 'film-fare' literature in all languages in the form of journals, magazines and reviews, besides the ubiquitous posters on walls and hustings, generated by a popular interest in film industry and film-stars, and flooding the book-stalls and claiming our attention when we are not viewing pictures on the screen.

What are the sources of the fascination of this new art, the seventh art, the art of the Tenth Muse? What are the secrets of its magnetic power on all and sundry?

In our time several mass media have come to stay—

* Mr. Thomas is now a U. G. C. Professor after retirement as Principal of Jamal Mohammed College, Tiruchirapalli—Ed.
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television, radio, broadcasting, communication satellites, newspapers, magazines, records and magnetic tapes. Not the least—in fact, the greatest of them—is the cinema. It is the most potent single means of expression and communication in our modern world and the greatest single influence operating in the lives of people in our time.

So rapid and so vast has been the development of this 'art industry' that there is scant critical consideration of the fundamental fact that a film, both in essence and effects, is unlike still photography, linear representation, literary narrative or theatrical presentation. The film director, like the novelist may change the scene *instantaneously* and—as the novelist has not yet succeeded in doing—*constantly*. It is this ability to dispense with the laws of time and space that is the screen's most important aesthetic capacity. By means of the cut, the director's choice of every image may be governed by theme without temporal or spatial limitations. The material of the film thus becomes the entire physical world; the director selects those sights and sounds that are related to his Schematic idea, and joins his images with a view to emotional overtones, so that two or more images in conjunction convey more than the sum of their visible content.

Next to its ability to defy the laws of time and space, the film's most unique attribute is its air of reality. Backgrounds in the theatre *suggest* the scene but movie sets *reproduce* it, or are actual. This unexampled naturalism of style has given the screen its noted immediacy of appeal. Most of its themes are drawn from contemporary life; they quite directly represent either the experiences or the wishes of its vast audience. The kind of awareness and the ease with which it is produced by a film is impossible for other media.

On the other hand, by virtue of the same freedom, and especially with the cartoon technique of Walt Disney, the motion picture can bring the farthest fields of fantasy right home. The magic carpet is seen in flight; the creatures of the fables and the fairy tales come to life; nature's wonders are outshone by such creatures of fancy as the 300-year-old man of *Lost Horizon*, Lilliputians and Superman; abstractions grow visible and sounds take shape. At will the screen makes wonders actual, or captures life itself.

Thus the film has the double appeal of romance and reality and the comprehensive possibilities—visual, musical, articulate and non-articulate communication—geared to convey immediacy. To a greater degree than the technical finish, the attraction of the film derives from the artistic element, which has been polished not only by the contribution made by the authors, writers and actors, but by the continual rivalry established among themselves in world-wide competition. The standard is attempted to be kept up by periodic award of honours at the various Film Festivals to films and their several 'makers'.

A film once made is repeatable any number of times at any number of places to any sizes of audiences at any hour of day. This easy accessibility of the cinema to people particularly in the developing countries, where cultural activities or programmes are altogether absent, or usually mediocre, is a potent factor for its hold on them. It fills a knowledge gap and a cultural vacuum, providing opportunities for enjoying, at a cheap cost and quite conveniently, music, dance, drama, all sorts of arts, history, scientific phenomena, etc. and their transforming and illuminating experiences. The informative, cultural and sensitizing value of the cinema must be specially appreciated. The following titles, selected at random, will indicate the extraordinary range of interest covered by the cinema to inform the mind or kindle the fancy or thrill the heart or mould one's character. Children will be delighted by such films as

Sound of Music, Mary Poppins, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Wizard of Oz, African Lion, Hatari, Drums of Destiny, Rhino reflect *wild life*. The *classics* are represented by Treasure Island, Great Expectations, Hamlet, Ben Hur. Imagination and fancy have full exercise in such *romances* as 20,000 Leagues under the Sea, King Solomon's Mines, 2001 Space Odyssey, Marooned, Lost in the Desert. Biblical and religious themes are found in Ten Commandments, King of Kings, Greatest Story ever Told, Thiruvilayadal, Deivam, Gnana Oli, Pavamanippu, etc. *History* is reconstructed imaginatively and entertainingly in Cromwell, Anne of the Thousand Days, War and Peace, Anarkali, Mughal-e-Azam . . . War and its glamour and grimness find screen expression in Battle of the Bulge, The Longest Day, The Guns of Navarone, Tobruk, etc. Samskara, 'a film of which India should be very proud' (Bernice Rubens, English novelist and Film Producer, London), is a searching analysis of *vital questions* such as Who is the judge of morals? Who is the sinner amongst us? Satyajit Ray's Pathar Panchalai and Jayakanthan's Unnai Pol Oruvan give us a new vision of life, sharpening our *sensitivities*.

The cinema world creates around itself a field of unusually deep and wide influence in the thinking, the habits, the life of the countries where it develops its power. Its influence is particularly great among the poorest classes, for whom the cinema is the only recreation after work, and among the youth who see in it a quick and attractive means of quenching the natural thirst for knowledge and experience which the age promises them.

The cinema is being employed by Governments, academic or religious bodies and merchant princes, as an agent of education, propaganda and advertisement, through feature films as well as documentaries. There is nothing to beat the cinema for teaching effectively 'techniques' of all sorts, or for teaching languages.

The development, in both democracies and totalitarian states, of centralized social planning, accounts for the important part the cinema and the other mass media, such as sound and television broadcasting, and the press, are required to play today. In Russia and China the mass media are substantially arms of government, with positive and comparatively single-minded functions. In America the main emphasis is on the commercial use of the means of mass communication. They tend to be aids to selling or profit-making organizations in their own right. In India the documentary films serve to intensify our national self-consciousness, even as they depict different facets of our national personality.

The influence of the cinema on modern humanity cannot be adequately estimated. The films shape the general outlook of men, their opinions and convictions in all possible fields: social, political, aesthetic, moral and religious. They also influence practical attitudes and concrete behaviour. Hence, for many, existence is interpreted and often lived in terms of the screen.

The masses do live under the spell of the cinema. The most ordinary among them are the more assiduous film fans—seeing them three times a week or more—and fall an easy prey to any kind of propaganda, their critical powers being less developed because of their low level of culture.

The cinema, having become the modern mass-communication medium par excellence, it is much more effective than the press, for the latter is a linguistic barrier to the illiterate and hence without any impact on them. The films speak through pictures and sound. Even if the dialogue script parts are not understood, foreign films can yet be effective through vernacular subtitles or commentaries. Films also exercise a deeper influence than expositions or exhibitions or art galleries, for in these the attention of

visitors or onlookers is divided: distributed on different objects or people around.

The cinema is the force that shapes the destinies of modern man, for, whether as groups or individuals, its power is experienced *before, during and after* a screening. We know that on occasions a whole town (anywhere in the world) lives for days or weeks caught up in the atmosphere of certain films, highly advertised through resounding propaganda in papers or abundantly suggestive posters that catch the eye everywhere. Before a film show eventuates individual spectators live already in an atmosphere of receptive expectancy through the enticing propaganda that precedes it. During the screening the generally unquestioning attitude is further assisted by the atmosphere prevailing in the theatre. There is a demand of concentrated attention on the lighted screen amidst the total darkness of the theatre. The screen alone speaks and emits sounds or music when all else is silent. The spectator is hypnotized, as it were, and his critical sense further blunted. After the spectacle, lasting impressions may be expected from such depersonalising experiences. We know how youth and, also more elderly persons, become blind film-star worshippers: imitating their hair or dress style, and even—often unfortunately—their conduct, treasuring up collections of photos or autographs of such stars.

As a matter of fact film star worship has produced a number of stupid patterns of behaviour in young people who would have been otherwise normal—as for example, all sorts of sexual aberrations such as the cults of Marilyn Monroe and Brigitte Bardot in the West. There even is ‘authentic idolatry’ as evidenced by the Marlon Brando cult and the James Dean cult in the West. There is the M.G.R. cult with the Tamil cinegoers, with numerous Sivaji Ganesan ‘manrams’ as well. At a deeper level memories keep haunting the mind and imagination, for catchy tunes from the films go into thousands of records and blare out in the streets, reawakening the impressions of film viewings.

The twentieth century, being the first century of the truly *mass media* of communication, gives a special emphasis to questions like: ‘Is high culture bound to be peripheral to the driving and overriding forces of mass-communication? Are all older types of culture likely to be submerged in new substitute forms? What is the relation of the creative arts and of disinterested intellectual activity to these new means of communication? Does the cinema prostitute its artistic capabilities to its commercial gains or political influence?’

Such is the power of the cinema on groups and individuals

that its influence can be for good or evil. Oftener than not films become destructive of all that is genuinely human. They can, however, transform ugly souls into noble personalities. It all depends on the type of pictures people are offered or agree to see. There are excellent films bearing both a high artistic quality and an ennobling lofty message. Art, truth of life, and morality can blend admirably to secure the best aesthetic and moral effect as well as the best box office prospects. The cinema can, then, in Antony Schillaci’s words (in his *Movies and Morals*) be ‘the modern man’s morality play.’

An aspect of the cinema’s wide influence is the importing of the techniques of the art of the cinema into the art of the novelist. Increasingly ‘close ups’, ‘symbolic objects or places’, ‘suspense’ in a crisis intensified by the frequent alternation of forces threatening the hero’s chances of escape and his allies rushing to his rescue, until he is rescued at the nick of time, are some of them.

But poor and evil films are many. There are films artistically good or mediocre but ethically objectionable. They cater directly or indirectly to the baser human tendencies, parading sex appeal, aggressivity or a general cynicism about higher values. The havoc wrought on thousands is deplorable.

Worse, there are also the silly films—pictures with an artificially happy ending, or such as create a general impression on the audience of cheap unreal optimism as if life was just a game with short cuts to the solutions of all its riddles. Such films are *immoral* even if they are *not obscene* because they lull men into illusory ideas about existence, or throw them into despair when they think of the misery of their own condition in contrast to the happier lot of people at large—supposedly, according to the film. Young men and women become addicted today—dreaming, to all sorts of false and utterly wrong notions on love and marriage and social life in general. They turn into social misfits. Sometimes, masterpieces of the seventh art made at exorbitant cost are also baneful because they are inspired by a philosophy, openly or subtly, undermining ethical values and human ideals.

Obviously, there is an urgent need for cinematographic education, to learn to patronize the right kind of films, and to mobilise opinion in favour of the right kind to urge the film makers to produce sound pictures that will be artistically and ethically attractive as well as commercially profitable, and the individual spectators to become more choosy about the films they want to see. Cine-Forums may be instituted to provide the guidelines both to the film-makers and the spectators.

Cinema and Culture

J. VASANTHAN,* *Madurai*

Nowhere else, perhaps, in the world, does the cinema play such an important part in the lives of the people as it does in Tamil Nadu. In some countries the cinema is a pastime; in others it is an art; in some others it is an industry; in Tamil Nadu it is a way of life. Wherever two or three young people gather together, the talk is almost invariably bound to revolve around the current crop of films. Talking about films seems to be the major occupation of our younger generation. There are fan clubs for all the major film stars that are organised and run with a zeal that is seldom expended for other activities. Even grown-ups are not immune to this craze.

This is not surprising, since a visual medium is naturally the most appealing, and hence the most potent culture force where the literacy rate is low. Advertisers, not excluding the Government of India and the State governments, have recognised the power of this medium and have made full use of it. As a propaganda vehicle, there is nothing to beat the cinema.

It has a special appeal to the poverty-stricken people, providing the much needed escape from their miserable existence. It wafts them into Fantasyland where they can identify with the gilded filmfolk, and delight in the obvious manifestations of wealth. The magic of the film stars and

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their screen deeds sheds the only ray of glamour into their drab lives. And they greedily lap up all the false sentiments dished out by the film maker. But does the film maker take a responsible attitude in making his films in the face of all this adulation?

The Tamil Cinema (but for a very few exceptions) never makes a sincere attempt to tell an honest story, or to pinpoint a relevant problem. It is neither creative nor aesthetically satisfying. Tamil films are frequently built around the public image of one or the other top film stars of the day. And since these stars are more concerned about projecting their own images than about turning in honest portrayals of characters, the films tend to follow regular patterns, giving no scope for originality, novelty or social consciousness, and sometimes sacrificing verisimilitude in order to accommodate the star's image.

The masses ascribe to the actors all the qualities they see portrayed on the screen. According to them the man who plays the hero is a good man in real life, too. And he can do no wrong. Stars like M. G. Ramachandran are folk heroes rather than film actors. (The dangers of such an attitude are brilliantly described by Jayakanthan in his novel *Cinemavukku Poana Sithalu*.) When such a folk hero is seen on the screen manhandling the heroine and knocking her about, the audience whistles in delight. Chivalry, consideration for the weaker sex, and all such ideals go down the drain in the flood of mass hero-worship.

Women, according to our film-makers, should ever be subordinate to men. They are mere instruments of pleasure or slaving conveniences in the house. They are not expected to show any spirit or independence of thinking. If any female character shows such spirit she is effectively squelched by the omnipotent hero, much to the delight of the audience. (The taming of the shrew is an ever popular theme in Tamil films. For example: *Arivali*, *Savale Samali*, *Pattikada Pattinama*.) It is proper for the man to impose his whims and idiosyncrasies on the woman of his choice, and it is the duty of the woman to bow to him. The only significant thing about a woman is her body. And so her life has to be governed by her body and by the man who possesses it. If she is raped by some despicable villain, she either has to die or be loyal to the rascal for the rest of her life. If a man abducts a girl and forcibly ties a yellow string around her neck her destiny is to live with him and serve him ever after. Fortunately such crudeness exists only in our films, not in our lives. But impressionable people constantly exposed to this type of film-making will lose all finer feelings, refinement and discriminating taste. They seem to be doing so already.

Our film-makers have set themselves double standards. On the one hand they exploit sex and vulgarity to the limit, borrowing unimaginatively from third rate western films, or concocting their own grotesque monstrosities. On the other hand they put on airs of righteousness and throw Thiruvalluvar and Avvaiyar at us. They feel the ancient Tamil classics are their tickets to respectability. Heroes spout precepts and truisms in the midst of the most outrageous behaviour. Heroines are carbon copies of Kannagi and Sita, untouched by the vicissitudes of time. It is all very well to emulate the values prescribed by the classics: but to transpose literally the incidents of the ancient books into a modern setting is an unimaginative procedure that strains to the utmost the willing suspension of disbelief of the discriminating viewers.

The Tamil film-maker mars everything he touches. He has a thoroughly false value system, and his grubby fingers leave smudges on every tender feeling, every worthwhile sentiment and every sacred institution. Even the so-called

devotional films portray gods and goddesses as vengeful and mercenary. And no connection is established between religion and morality. The trouble is the film-maker reveals his own personality in the delineation of the character of the gods. Money seems to be the ruling factor of our film world. Making money is the only religion of the film folk. And sentiment, feeling, devotion, morality and all other such things are measured in terms of money. This is the pattern in the film-maker's personal life, and so he projects the same pattern in his films too. According to the moral code that prevails in the film-world, a man is considered a good husband however unfaithful he is to his wife, provided he buys his wife all the jewels, clothes, houses and cars she wants. His devotion to his children is judged by the dowry he pays for his daughter and the fees he pays for his sons in some costly public school. And his piety is measured by the donations he makes to the temples. Thus a quick visit and a large donation to a prestigious temple like Tirupati or Rameswaram is enough to offset all the iniquity of the previous year. Propitiate the gods properly, and they will bless you with black money. This is the belief, the sum of all their religious thinking.

Can we expect anything worthwhile from such people? They go blithely on, churning out their unscrupulous products, with their eye on the box-office and their hands in the pockets of the gullible film fan, using every gimmick in their bag of tricks. They ride the bandwagon when any political party is in the ascendant. They drop names that are dear to the masses, quite irrelevantly, and are applauded appropriately by the mob. They glorify illiterate villagers, praise the poor for their virtue (which is a myth anyway), and devise scenes in which the crude village idiot wins a moral victory over the educated upper classes, or lewdly woos and wins a rich college girl. They never portray the ugliness and squalor of poverty. No wonder, since the illiterate poor are their most constant patrons. And so it goes—they do everything but making an honest attempt to artistically comment on life as it is.

When art (if our films can be called that) fails to reflect life, it becomes irrelevant. But we have already noted the stranglehold the cinema has over the masses. And so we are on the brink of the very great danger of Life imitating Art, of the people refusing to come down to earth and face reality after having gorged themselves on fantasy, and creating a fools' paradise for themselves. Considering the large numbers of people who rely entirely on Tamil films not only for their entertainment but also for their spiritual and intellectual food, the threat posed by the cinema as it is today becomes very real and takes on a terrifying magnitude. And we have to decide how we are going to face this threat.

First of all, artistic impulse, not money, should be the ruling factor among film-makers. This will become possible only when creative and dedicated men take to film-making. This has been done to some extent in Bengal and Kerala, but not in Tamil Nadu. The Christian community is still indifferent to the cinema. There are practically no Christian film-makers in Tamil Nadu today. It is high time that we put aside our aversion and start recognising the tremendous potential of this medium. It ensures a readymade audience for anyone who has anything to say. Shouldn't we make use of it?

When more and more enlightened people start making films, honestly commenting on life, and artistically creating high emotion and analysing nuances of feeling, the tastes of the masses might be gradually refined. If such an improvement takes place the way will be paved for a cultural renaissance in Tamil Nadu.

Theology in Action*

REV. F. N. SUGIRTHARAJ, *Madras*

I was asked by the Committee of the Urban Industrial Mission of the East Asia Christian Conference to attend this Workshop. The organisers chose Manila as the venue for the Workshop because of the tense political situation which really helped the participants to see theology as a reality.

The Workshop was a confrontation between Theological Professors of the theological Seminaries in Asia and Frontier men like us. While the theological professors accepted that they live in a secluded world speaking theology which is so irrelevant and meaningless, we active men have accepted that, having been soaked and immersed with the problems of the poor and the needy, we have forgotten all about theology which means 'God practice'. Stress was laid on liberating theology from colonial captivity and foreign words and incarnating it in new words that will arise from the cultural struggles for freedom, equality and justice.

Filipino Christians and their Struggle for National Liberation

Philippines is one of the richest and most beautiful countries on earth. Yet the Filipino is a poor man sitting on a pot of gold. Martial law had been enforced by President Marcos a few days earlier and mass arrests were taking place. The cultural revolution which began five years ago had swept across the country and those who are committed to this revolution are student activists, sensitive university professors, landless peasants and radical priests. Though Marcos branded all of them as Communists, these revolutionaries are of the opinion: 'Better to die on your feet than to live on your knees.'

Even after a long period of colonial rule, the Philippines is still virtually an American colony. American economic interests dictate terms to the Filipinos and the local elites of political influence and the feudal landlords collaborate effectively with American interests. American investments control 45-53% of the economy especially strategic industries such as transportation, mining and banking. The profits of American investments are not re-invested again but are taken out of the country. As a result of this economic exploitation, the Filipino has been victimised and has become poor and poverty-stricken. In the context of massive poverty and unemployment, 90% of the people earn less than 4,000 pesos which is equivalent to Rs. 4,000 a year.

The following are the reasons for the involvement of Filipino Christians in this revolution.

1. Salvation and liberation have been promised by Jesus Christ to all men and especially to the poor, the destitute and the oppressed.

2. Solidarity with mankind means solidarity with the poor and the oppressed who do not have any voice at all.
3. Talking about liberation or revolution means talking of Christian faith itself.
4. The Church can never remain politically neutral during crises. To remain neutral in a struggle between the weak and the powerful is in fact to side with the power and the might of the world.
5. Christian charity in all its effectiveness can never become effective unless it is channelled into political and social action and affect the social structures themselves.
6. The Church often says, 'I am against injustice but I cannot oppose injustice, but will rather suffer by injustice.' But can a Christian allow others to suffer by injustice? Can he simply close his eyes without raising his voice? If he keeps quiet, it means he collaborates effectively with the evil forces. Therefore opposition to injustice should be concretely expressed in action.
7. By virtue of their belief in a totally and radically new earth and new heaven every government has to be viewed critically, for no political structure is perfect.
8. They believe in establishing bases among the masses and politicise people of their rotten conditions and organise them for fighting for their own rights. This would make them understand what is democratic equality and bring forth a new political, social and economic structure into existence.
9. If Christians are genuine they must participate in any struggle for liberation, not because the struggle can do much for Christianity, but because Christians can do much for the struggle.
10. During these struggles Christians have to face shame and even death. But shame is a revolutionary emotion which prevents them from yielding to the occupational hazards of the people. To be ashamed means to accept to be humble, and even anonymous in the struggle. Shame means not to accept applauses as we often do, but to accept reproach.

Though so many Christian priests and laymen have been either arrested or have gone underground by now, I am sure they are filled with the Spirit of God with which they will fight out their destiny.

* A Short Report from the Workshop for Theology in Action held in Manila from September 1-13, 1972—Ed.

The Church does not need a face-lift, it needs spiritual regeneration.

—S. L. PARMAR: *Lift up Your Eyes*.

To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages.

GANDHIJI, quoted by S. L. PARMAR IN *Lift up Your Eyes*.

Cinema and I

B. J. PREMIAH,* *Arasaradi, Madurai*

When I found Christ, I found the world in which to live. St. Paul wrote, 'All things belong to you the world belongs to you, for you belong to Christ' (I Corin. 3:21-23). The world of sunrise and sunset, the world of beauty, the world of literature and the world of art belong to me, for I belong to Christ. The Cinema has been recognised as one of the art forms of this age. So I venture to write, not on 'Cinema vs. Me', but on 'Cinema and I'. The cinema is certainly the most appealing form of art to modern man. Through the power of its visual image it can convey the same message to both sophisticated and critical audiences and illiterate and uncultured audiences.

I wish to be an optimist, to take the good out of everything and use it. I saw a Tamil film 'Punnagai' (Smile) recently. In that story three young men marry. One marries for convenience, the other for convention and the third with conviction. After seeing that film, every man should have this question in mind, 'What about my marriage? What is it for? Convenience or Convention? or Conviction?' Some years ago, I had seen a Tamil film, 'Nenjil Ore Aalayam' (A temple in the heart). In that film a medical student falls in love with a girl. But, owing to unavoidable circumstances in her family, she marries another man who is suffering from cancer. The couple go to see a cancer specialist, who is none other than the boy-friend of that girl. She thinks that he will kill her husband while operating, with the intention to possess her. But the doctor tries his level best to save her husband. He succeeds in operating the patient, but finally the doctor dies. This is a great sacrifice. I was telling this story in a sermon as an illustration. I concluded saying that what constrained the doctor to sacrifice his life was the love of the one who sacrificed Himself on the Cross. Nobody criticised me for using this illustration because they never knew that the story was taken from a film. I have used many such illustrations taken from films in my sermons.

In India the film industry is being 'exploited' to the utmost in the mission of large scale mass instruction for inculcating in the people a deeper sense of responsibility and active participation in political and socio-economic measures aimed at the progress and growth of the nation. Some of the major criticisms against Indian films are over-emphasis on crime, violence and sex, innumerable coincidences and too much of singing and dancing. Indian films have been losing their 'Indianness'. Religious films have been nothing more than crude mythologicals. To improve the quality of Indian films, cine forums and group discussions are being conducted. This has resulted in better films being produced.

In the U.S.A. the Church interest in film as film is paralleled and encouraged, by the growing interest among younger generation in the medium. One youth group spent from Friday night to Sunday morning viewing short films, and planning how they would conduct the Sunday morning service. Finally they selected the film 'The Stringbean' as the sermon. Participants report that the story of a lonely woman growing a bean in a pot moved many of the youngsters to tears, something that had not happened through a sermon in anyone's memory. Seminaries are including film study as a part of their curriculum. Claremont School of Theology in California offers a major in Theology and the Arts with heavy concentration on film. Programmes of this sort involve students in detailed study of film as an art form, in the language and history of film, and in an examination of the theological implication of film statements. 'Film Information', a journal written by Church film leaders and critics, covers all theatrical films in current release. Reviews are written for churchmen who have a more-than-average interest in film, and they have been filling a need expressed by churchmen who want to have advance information about pictures for their own guidance as well as for that of their children.

The church-film relationship in India remains in a state of mutual suspicion, often breaking out into outright hostilities. The Church fails to recognise the cinema as an art form and a cultural force which can perform a renewing function in our society. A church concerned with societal renewal, can use this medium to help men and women to lead better lives in obedience to God's will and for the well-being of our society and nation. The Christian Arts and Communication Service, Madras, has ventured into the film field. The name of the film in Malayalam is 'Kaattu Vithachavan' (He who sowed the wind). The theme is to bring out an understanding of the nature and destiny of man and the teaching of the Christian truth that a man's harvest in life will depend on what he sows. The lesson that the film teaches is that life without God is devoid of meaning and purpose.

Since the Church is called to be a Communicating Community it has to jump fences. We have been given greater and sharper instruments to communicate and gather the harvest than any other generation of history. Let us not forget the warning of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'Where a man has been given much, much will be expected of him; and the more a man has had entrusted to him the more he will be required to repay' (Luke 12:48).

* Mr. Premiah is a student at the Tamilnad Theological Seminary at Arasaradi.—Ed.

Christianity is not to play the role of regulariser or rationaliser of an existing order. The good news questions the basis of all orders.

—S. L. PARMAR: *Lift up Your Eyes.*

Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent—and often even vocal sanction of things as they are.

—S. L. PARMAR: *Lift up Your Eyes.*

Christian Ethics and the Cinema

C. AUGUSTINE THIRIYEGADASAN,* Delhi

Ethics is the study of 'ways approved by the group or society'. 'To study choice as affected by the rights of others and to judge it as right or wrong by this standard is ethics'. These are the definitions given by John Dewey. The second definition presumes that life has a purpose. This is the relevant definition in Christianity. But the acceptance of this will be condemned by a modern thinker like Jacques Monod on two grounds. To him there is neither good nor bad, but thinking makes it so. Hence the imposition of morals tantamounts to the imposition of our absurd outlook on nature which is a moral. Second, life has no purpose but to preserve itself and to reproduce. These contentions can be set aside since Teilhard de Chardin has included ethics as an important aspect of evolution in the noosphere. Besides, in the noosphere, evolution will be stifled unless life has a purpose other than the ones found in the lower animals. Therefore, we shall use the second definition of ethics.

We are living with a purpose. Our purpose is God's purpose. The purpose is fulfilled if we love. We can love only if we are just. When we are just in our actions, we begin to love. Christian justice calls for the welfare of the other before that of mine. Thus the dynamics of the whole society is smoothly linked to achieve God's purpose.

My action has to be good, not only for me, but also for others, not because it is politically inevitable, but because I love you just as I love myself. I love you not because of necessity but because of love for my God. This is the basis of Christian ethics.

Let us see the movie in the context of our living. Living consists of our conduct and purpose.

As the spectators come out of the hall, tired and thoughtful, wiping their faces, the impact they have received remains in their mind. In some, it is visible in the new accent they have acquired or in their style of walking even. But what is it that they have received which is of ethical importance?

May be they have got a moral, a truth from the story visibly portrayed by the actor, or even a new outlook.

What are the morals they have received? It might be the power of a confident hero who sets out to correct the villain as it is in *Phool aur Pathar* or *Muje Jeene Do* or *The Dirty Dozen*. It might be the awareness of the problems of urbanisation as in *Dastak* where a rural couple rent the former abode of a prostitute in the city. It might be the thawing of the social hierarchy that is retained in the mind when a man sees a film like *Rikshawkaran*. It might be the awareness of a specific aspect of society such as poverty, effectively shown in *Pathar Panchjali* (footpath dwellers). It might be the awareness of the inadequacies in one's personality as he is exposed to a powerful character like *Patton* or *Lawrence of Arabia*. These movies give an honest man an opportunity to think about the moral strength of the character portrayed. For example, in *Lawrence of Arabia* the moral premise on which he gets the guts to unite the Arab kingdoms is an interesting point. When we want to help others, on which basis do we set out to help them? As we see, we begin to think about issues like these. *Patton* brings before us a man who was a man of God and also a man who was an efficient General. He prays at the altar kneeling but curses like a stable boy. The film also

makes us more sensitive to the character of our fellow-men. How much is Patton touched to see the soldiers walking through the snowfall on a long march. A film like *The Bridge on the River Kwai* challenges our personality, as the hero suffers for the sake of his soldiers. It challenges the leadership qualities of the spectators. Movies like *Love Story* and *Dr. Zhivago* are excellent experiences which segregate ourselves and put ourselves into our neighbours' shoes.

Unfortunately, few movies belong to these kinds. Most of the films of India are of the formula type: 'Once there was a goody goody king and a goody goody queen... and they lived happily ever after.' They are irrelevant to our living standards. Today, our living is highly politicised. This element rarely forms the plot for a story. Corruption and perverted leadership are not brought to the movie screen. Accepted themes with text-book morals splashed with a generous doses of sex and crime have become the order of the day. Anything filled with sensational actions done by a Superman or words lined with humour provides a large avenue for escapism, but are box-office hits.

The Indian screen today has forgotten to educate its audience of social ethics. Being the pop medium in India, this ought to have played a pioneering role in educating the mass to evolve themselves into better men. But, alas the celluloid world has played almost always a second fiddle to the stragglers in the society catering to the demands of the vulgar tastes.

The portrayal of sex is vulgar on the Indian screen. It is shown in irrelevant places. The showing of naked breasts in *Two Women*, when the mother is assaulted in the Cathedral looks natural. But when a cabaret is thrust into the movie solely with the motive of box-office collections, it looks ugly. It is out of context and it proves the eagerness of our producers to sustain and nourish vulgar tastes. As the custodians of popular culture, it is their duty to remove the fly from the ointment. On the top of this tomfoolery, in the land of Kama Sutra, kisses are disallowed on the screen! On the other hand, highly obscene suggestive gestures are not uncommon in almost all the movies. Why this anomaly? Do the custodians of culture mean to uphold unnaturalness for all time? Man has come of age.

A deity or a mosque or a cross is conveniently chosen to symbolise God to retain some religious colour to the movies. We have some Indian films of the Bakhti type. But efforts have not been made to bring out other meaningful types. This obviously shows that to our custodians of pop culture, God is still up there!

Any honest Christian ought to discern the ideas thrown up on the screen and gather evidence for his outlook. Since the Indian movie world is far away from reality we go into the story with suspicion. This minimises our quantity of inert ideas at the back of our mind and enables us to look at characters critically. I haven't yet digested *Lolita*; I don't know if I would.

Films try to portray our living. The popular movies are like interesting gossips. Their ethical content for the society is very little, since the hero is mostly ego-centered. To give a touch of social concern, the hero covers the naked

* Mr. Augustine is a member of the Indian Economic Service under training.—Ed.

boy with his shawl. The moviegoers want to learn little social ethics from the matinee idols; they know too much of reality. The movie world is not a cultural market where supply is oriented towards demand. Culture is not a commodity. Of course, the movies have contributed towards the growth of individual ethics. The characters

shown are quite meaningful to them. This is very useful, since in India social ethics is predominant. Individual ethics is still in its cradle. The child deserves to be nourished. Will the movie-makers come forward to launch a series of films on powerful characters, useful and relevant to the modern context?

Bishop William Paul Vachalan

J. M. STEWART, *Christava-Deepika, Trivandrum*

The sudden and sad demise of Rt. Rev. William Paul Vachalan, Bishop in the South Kerala Diocese of the Church of South India, has left the church and the whole of the Diocese in deep sorrow. It happened at 10-30 a.m. on Sunday, 5th November, '72, quite suddenly and unexpectedly, following a heart stroke. He had been ailing for the previous one week as he had a mild heart-attack on the 30th of October. He was under medical care and rest and he had completely recovered from his illness. He did not attend the Diocesan Executive that met on the 4th. But he had a long chat with the Diocesan Secretary, Mr. V. Thomas, late in the evening on the various decisions taken on that day. He looked fresh and healthy. The next morning he didn't attend the church, though his wife and daughter had gone to the M. M. Church in the Diocesan compound. Mrs. William came a bit early from the church, and she saw her husband writing a letter hurriedly—his last letter. The time was 9-45 a.m. As the Bishop desired a bath, he went to the bathroom and, while he was having his wash, he had the second stroke, and he immediately ran to the bed. The Assistant Director of Health Services of the Kerala State, Dr. John Kirkpatrick, who was attending the Communion Service at the church was immediately summoned and he tried artificial respiration. But everything failed at 10-30 a.m.

The A.I.R. and the important news agencies were immediately informed of the death of the Bishop, and the Diocesan members who came to know of the news over the radio, came in hundreds to the L.M.S. Compound, Trivandrum, where the body was kept in state, in the central hall of the Bishop's House. The body was removed to the Triple Jubilee Memorial Hall, in the same campus at 8-30 the next morning and was kept there for the public to pay their last tributes. Innumerable wreaths were laid on the body by various denominations of the Church, parishes, organizations, etc. Three ministers of the State sent their messages of condolence. At 3-30 p.m. the body was taken in a procession to the Mateer Memorial Church, where the funeral service was conducted. Deputy Moderator of the CSI, the Rt. Rev. Lesslie Newbigin, arrived at 4-20, and the service started with Rt. Rev. T. S. Joseph, Asst. Bishop, Madhya Kerala Diocese, leading. Many bishops of the C.S.I., Mar Thoma and Catholic Churches and other dignitaries were present at the funeral service.

The body was taken out into the city in a procession of thousands of people, and was interred in the Church Cemetery at 7-20 p.m. on the 6th November, 1972. He was 62 years old.

Bishop William was born in Calicut, on 23-8-1910. He was the son of Theodore Vachalan, who was a clerk in the Commonwealth Company. At the age of 8, William lost his father and he was brought up under the care of his maternal uncle, the Rev. Sathyanathan. He had his early and secondary education in Calicut and took the training course in teaching and became a teacher. But he was sent for theological studies by the Basel Mission missionary of his time. He had Dr. Russell Chandran and Rt. Rev. I.R.H.

Gnanadasan as his classmates at the Theological College, Bangalore. He was awarded a special merit certificate for his proficiency in Sanskrit while at Bangalore. After taking his B.D. degree he proceeded for his M.Th. studies, but unfortunately his mother died at the time of the examination and he was not able to take the degree. On his return he was made the attorney of the Basel mission properties and in this office he continued for a considerable time. For a short while he was teaching in the Theological College at Bangalore and then in 1952 he joined the staff of the Kerala United Theological Seminary at Trivandrum where he became Principal later. In 1966 he left the seminary and took charge of a parish—St. Paul's Church—at Shoranur. He was elected Bishop and consecrated in 1967. He had married Grace in 1944. He has left behind his wife and his only daughter.

He was a scholar in Greek, Hebrew and Sanskrit. He had published several books on the Old Testament and it was only three months ago that he had completed the work of a Greek-English-Malayalam lexicon, one which he started working about 15 years ago. The T.L.C. is undertaking the printing of the Lexicon.

The span of 5 years in the life of a Diocese may not be very long. But the people of the S. K. Diocese cherish the revered memory of their beloved Bishop who left them suddenly, for what he did for them during this short period of 5 years. The multifarious developments that this period witnessed cannot be easily enumerated. But there are a few things which need special mention. He was able to organise the Gospel work of the diocese in a unique way which has started yielding good fruits. His accomplishments in the field of charitable work will remain as living monuments. He started a Blind School named 'Light to the Blind' at Varkala, which has by now attracted the special attention of the public and the Government. He established 5 'Balamandirams' (orphanages) which now look after more than 600 children with the help of the KNH. He was one who always encouraged youth to have active participation in Church activities. This has actually given the Youth of the diocese a sense of belonging and their efforts in the various fields of church activities have become noteworthy. He has given final shape to a master plan for the development of the head-station compound which is estimated at 60 lakhs of rupees. The work has already begun. The establishment of a 'Home for the Handicapped' is under way. He had completed the spade work for the starting of a School for the Dumb along with the Blind School. The production centre (mechanical) which he had started is nearing completion. The number of new churches established during these five years is proof enough for the success of the evangelistic work in which he could act very successfully.

It was at a time when the diocese was dreaming of great things from God through this simple, unusually gentle, unassuming servant of our Lord, that the call to Home came so suddenly. It might take a long time for the diocese to recover from the staggering blow it has received.

Tamil Cinema—An Entertainment Colossus

S. THEODORE BHASKARAN,* Madras

From the school boy drafting his maiden love-letter to socio-political changes, the cinema acts as a significant influence on life and affairs in Tamil Nadu. We need not go into details to substantiate this and to plead that it deserves better notice than it now gets from the Church. We will take it for granted.

The Cinema, the single domineering mass entertainment in our midst, affects the attitudes of people, literate and illiterate, towards ideas and shapes their social behaviour in the process of entertaining. In addition to carrying on the tradition of folklore, the Tamil film took part in History, in the independence struggle and the Tamil renaissance that accompanied it, which incidentally affected the Church rather belatedly. As a responsible Christian has to be conscious of and sensitive to the changes taking place in the society in which he lives, a knowledge of its role and place in our society becomes essential.

It was in 1916 that the cinema appeared on the Tamil Nadu scene. Nataraja Mudaliyar Company, Star of the East Film and General Pictures Corporation Ltd., were the earliest to come into the field. They were located at Nagercoil and Madras. Nataraja Mudaliar and K. Subramanyam, who were with us till two years ago were associated with these companies. Nataraja Mudaliyar produced *Keechaka Vatham* in 1916 and it being a silent movie it got screened all over India. The films of the silent era were mythologicals; Tamil folklore and legends came alive on the screen. The advent of the 'talkie' gave a fillip to this trend. In 1934, K. Subramanyam directed and released *Pavalakodi*, a popular tale from Mahabharatha. This was followed by T. R. Sundaram of Modern Theatres' *Krishna Leela*. Therukoothu, the popular form of entertainment in Tamil Nadu was one long string of songs and the films continued this tradition. The early films had fifty to sixty songs each. The release of *Balayogini*, directed by K. Subramanyam in 1938 marked a deviation. This film told the story of a Brahmin widow who sets out with her daughter to live among servants. *Thyagabhumi*, from the same director, was another social that questioned traditional values.

Under Gandhiji, nationalistic fervour was reaching new heights at this time and films helped the cause of the freedom struggle. Nationalistic songs began to appear. Chalks, portraits of national leaders and other such symbols of nationalism were deftly introduced. *Sevasadan* of 1938 was replete with such symbols. In a society with a large percentage of illiteracy, the visual impact of such films was tremendous.

It was at this stage that classical musicians like G. N. Balasubramanyam, Dandapani Desigar and M. S. Subbulakshmi began to act in films and brought classical music to the masses for the first time. Then came the war. *Manasamrakshamam*, *Burma Rani* and *Chitra* were war effort films. When M. K. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar and P. U. Chinnappa starred in hits like *Haridas* and *Krishna Vijayam*, star system had already begun to emerge.

After Independence, film production in Tamil Nadu steadily began to increase. The struggle for freedom and its attainment was followed by a period of introspection. Films with distinct social messages began to arrive on the scene and the popularity of these films was a sign of the society becoming self-conscious. N. S. Krishnan, who had already been popular through the mythologicals, filmed and acted in *Nallathambi* in 1948. The film, written by C. N. Anna-

durai, had a socialistic appeal and glorified prohibition. The trend was set for rationalistic socials. *Velaikari* and *Sorgavasal*, both by C. N. Annadurai, soon followed. Such films raised the story-writer to a new eminence and film scripts began to gain importance. During this period Tamil film music began to be influenced by western music, probably owing to the increasing use of western musical instruments.

By the early fifties the star system had come to stay.

Shivaji Ganesan and M. G. Ramachandran were dominating the Tamil film scene. With the star system, films began to fall into a pattern. Sridhar tried to go off the beaten tract as a script-writer through his *Ethirparathathu*, but when he emerged as a Director through *Kalyanaparisu* in 1959, he too stuck to the formula. However, in his hands Tamil films once again were alive as an entertainment form, though not as an agency of social awakening.

In 1965, Jayakanthan, the writer, produced *Unnai Pol Oruvan*, one of his own short novels and made cinematic history. The film dealt with the story of a poor woman and her growing son. Deserted by her husband, she falls in love with a road-side astrologer and bears a child. After being exposed to different social situations and to the indifference of her teenage son, she eventually dies, leaving the baby in the hands of her son. This thematic freedom came as a breath of fresh air and the film got tremendous notice from critics all over the world. Jayakanthan went on to make his second film *Yarukkaka Azhuthan?* This is the story of a simpleton, powerfully portrayed by Nagesh, who works as an odd-job man for a dedicated Christian evangelist. While holding the gas-lamp in the way-side meetings, he listens to the sermons of his employer. Whether the sermons have any effect on the way-side listeners or not, the message of love leaves a deep impression on the lamp-bearer and the story goes on to elaborate this impact. The total effect this film has on the audience can be likened to a well-delivered sermon by a forceful preacher on the subject of being pure in heart and on being merciful.

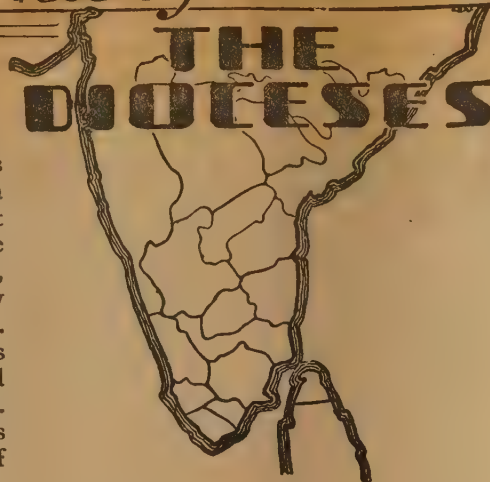
These two films are good examples of the influence of contemporary Tamil literature on the cinema. Earlier Kalki's *Kalvanin Kathali* and Parthiban *Kanavu* and Akilan's *Pavai Vilakku* had been successfully filmed. One hopes that the present-day writers like Sa. Kandasamy, Ashokamithran and Na. Muthusamy, who are taking the scene of contemporary Tamil literature by storm, will soon influence Tamil films.

During its forty-one years of existence, the Tamil cinema has grown into an entertainment colossus. But unfortunately one comes across a very negative attitude to films among Christians. The desire of parents to protect their children from damaging influences is understandable and is welcome. The proper way to achieve this however, is to instil in them a capacity to evaluate films. We do not prevent our children from reading books because of the availability of pornographic literature. In fact, when the printing press was invented, there was a similar outcry in Europe. Now looking at it from a considerable distance, in terms of History, we are able to see how baseless that fear was. In any case one cannot completely succeed in shutting off the influence of films even on those who don't see them at all. Once television is introduced, followed by a link-up with com-

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* Mr. Bhaskaran, back from departmental assignment at Shillong, is now in Madras as Asst. Post-Master General.—Ed.

THE DIOCESES



RAYALASEEMA

Retreat of the Clergy

The Clergy and the Senior Workers of Rayalaseema Diocese about 65 in number met for the Annual Retreat at Gooty from 16-18 January 1973 when the Rt. Rev. J. E. L. Newbigin, M.A., D.D., Bishop in Madras (and Acting Deputy Moderator, CSI), was the guest speaker. A special feature of this retreat was that we had the fellowship of the retired clergy of the diocese for the first time. We had devotions, Bible Study, talks on health and hygiene, problems of drought and youth.

In these days of growing importance of youth on the one side and their unrest on the other, it was thought that we could use the youth for Church work (and they will do well if entrusted) after giving them some training. It was also thought that the relevant question is rather what we can do for them than what they can do for us.

The bishop conducted the study of chapters 13 to 17 of St. John's Gospel and led us to the depths of the meaning of Christian virtues like humility, service, love, joy and peace, etc. He dealt with the Cross, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ and said that the Cross is the mighty victory over the world, sin and death and that at the Resurrection God vindicated Him as the Son of God and Saviour of the world and that at the Ascension Christ set in motion the great

movement the end of which is nothing less than the New Creation in which the Holy Spirit is at work and greater works follow. He further said that since we are now in the New Creation, the Church must be the place where Christ's life and love are manifested in all circumstances of our day to day life and in every nation and people and that we bear fruit by reproducing Jesus in our lives. It is our weakness that we first plan our work and think that our service, suffering and cross are true. But in reality the true service and cross are those, not of our choice, but given to us by Him in His own way. In the High Priestly Prayer (ch. 17) Christ consecrated Himself, His disciples, the Church and also the world through them so that all may be one family with

love-one-another-ness and with inward and outward unity. He said that if we have close relationship with God and man, we have a foretaste of the Eternal Life. We are chosen to be witnesses and ambassadors for Christ. Just as the postman must ensure that money orders are delivered to the concerned persons if he is not to be at fault, so is the Christian's duty to witness to others: we must proclaim Christ without any reservation. The bishop suggested that in order to make our preaching more effective and clearly understood, we must be brave to use the phraseology of other faiths. For example, we can say 'Jesus is OHM'.

The concluding part of the retreat was the Covenant Service in which we re-dedicated ourselves for God and His work. The Rev. A. Andrew, the Bishop's Commissary, preached the sermon and said that God is always with us as we launch out in our work. When we meet tall and giantlike people of wisdom and strength of both good and evil (Deut. 1:31) God takes care of us. Then the Bishop in Madras pronounced the Benediction and the retreat ended.

To sum up, the retreat was a blessing. We had greater insight into the realities of our life and richness of God's love. We felt the presence of God. We are thankful to God for this new beginning.

27-1-1973.

I. DEVADANAM.

Letter to the Editor

BELIEVE IT OR NOT—KURAL WAS WRITTEN BY A CHRISTIAN!

Sir,

During the last three years a revolution has been taking place in the interpretation of the world famous Tamil classic, *Tirukural*. These are the bare facts without comments.

Mr. Deivanayagam, born of illiterate parents, who hails from Panchalankurichi (of Kattabomma Naickan fame), slowly found his way to Bishop Sargent Training School where he became a convert to Christianity and received his immersion baptism in the year 1954. His flair for Tamil prompted him to study privately to obtain the diploma of 'Pulavar'. Now at the age of thirty-seven he has a teacher wife and both of them are in the Railway school in Madras.

Gripped by a conviction that *Kural* was definitely a Christian book and that its author must have been a convert from Jainism to Christianity he wrote his first book, pawning his wife's gold jewels to purchase Tamil types and sent the composed matter to a printer and gave the book the title, *Is Tiruvalluvar a Christian?*

With the printed matter in hand he walked from scholar

to scholar for an introduction, was rebuffed, scorned and ignored for several weeks till he tumbled against Mr. Dhanapandian of All-India Radio who procured for him a chit from the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and the Archbishop of Madras, Mylapore.

A scholar who also had similar ideas on the subject asked the Pulavar to take leave from his school for two years, paid him his usual salary and asked him to write books on the subject, paid the printing bill and the result is that six books totalling 1,000 pages have come out under the following names.

1. *Is Tiruvalluvar a Christian?*
2. *Ainthavithan yar?*
3. *Van ethu?*
4. *Neethar yar?*
5. *Sandror yar?*
6. *Ezhw pirappu?*

The gist of the six books is as follows:—

Tiruvalluvar is a Christian. The first three chapters are the praise of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Sandror (witnesses) is the name of the Christian community in

(Continued on p. 15)



World Confessional Families' Aid Sought in Scripture Distribution

Geneva—Representatives of 12 world confessional families heard a plea for more common work on Bible use and distribution at their annual meeting in the Ecumenical Centre here in late November.

The Rev. John Weller, an official of the United Bible Societies (UBS), called attention to the 'unexpected biblical renewals going on in the most unlikely places, and the extraordinary circulation of new, dynamic, common-language translations'. He urged Protestant churches to form a partnership for Scripture distribution similar to that between the UBS and the Roman Catholic Church. Dr. Hans-Ruedi Weber, director of biblical studies for the World Council of Churches, warned that confessional theologians were in danger of making their own biblical canon by selecting key texts or one scheme of salvation history and reading the rest of the Bible from this viewpoint only. Ecumenically minded people, on the other hand, are so eager to harmonize the Biblical diversity that they, sometimes do violence to the original texts. Each church needs

therefore to submit its understanding of faith to the correction and recognition of churches from other confessional families and other continents.

EPS.

Adventist-World Council Discussions

At the conclusion of the eighth annual dialogue between Seventh-Day Adventists and representatives of the World Council of Churches held recently it was decided to move future discussions to national and local levels. A file has been prepared of conclusions reached at international level as well as information about the World Council and the SDA Church.

EPS.

Long Pilgrimage in South Africa Draws to a Close

Cape Town—A mass service will be held in Cape Town on January 14 to mark the end of a 600-mile walk undertaken by an ecumenical group of clergy and laity to draw attention to the 'appalling consequences' for African family

life of migratory labour. The long march from Grahamstown to Cape Town will have taken 30 days.

The eight people concerned, all white South Africans belonging to the

Anglican, methodist and Roman Catholic churches, said they were moved to take part in the 'pilgrimage' because they were deeply disturbed by the situation in the country. 'This society; ... is tearing husband and wife apart through the system of migratory labour'. The marchers said they were asking parliament to make it legal 'for every South African husband and wife who wish to do so to live together with their children in a family home at their place of work'.

One of the group, the Rev. David Russell, who recently spent six months fasting, remarked that 'most people seem to be more interested in our blisters than in what we are trying to say'. He said the group would prefer people 'to think about the working and living conditions of black African Workers'.

In Mambia (South West Africa), the Diocesan Synod in Damaraland has asked its Bishop, the Right Rev. Colin Winter, who was deported last February, to continue as Bishop though he is now exiled. The Bishop was expelled as an 'undesirable'.

E.P.S.

(Continued from page 13)

munication satellites, films all over the world will be brought right to our drawing rooms.

Hence the need for a more purposeful attitude. There are encouraging signs in the Tamil Church. *The Churchman* publishing articles on the cinema is one such. An attempt at evaluating films should be made. The YMCA, YWCA and the SCM can help in this direction. In conventions for students films can be discussed. The Cinema is an art form and a powerful force leading to social changes. The Christian who is increasingly becoming

conscious of his responsibilities to those around him, cannot afford to ignore this fact. It is this realisation that has prompted the Christian Arts and Communication Centre, Madras, to produce a full-length feature film in Malayalam titled *Kattu Vithachavan*. James M. Wall in his recent book *THE Church and the Cinema* (William B. Erdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich.) puts it neatly when he says that we have to get away from the 'Church vs. Cinema' syndrome and appreciate and evaluate 'film as film'.

(Continued from p. 14)

South India. Cycle of birth and death is foreign to Kural, but conversion or being born again is enjoined in the book.

In May, 1972, a conference of top-ranking scholars from the Universities of Tirupathi, Madras, Annamalai and Madurai was convened in Madras by the Christian Arts and Communication Centre. It cost over ten thousand rupees. The Conference failed to give a verdict on the contents of these books and dispersed. The press gave no reports of it.

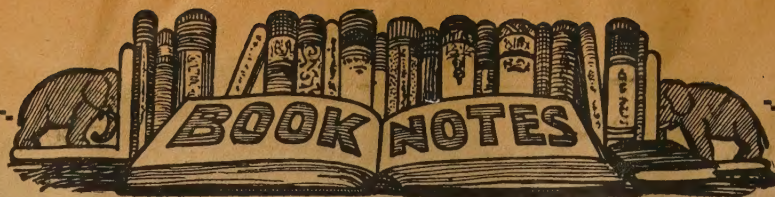
In August all the printed books were purchased by a publishing house and they have now arrived in the high school

libraries throughout Tamil Nadu. The R. C. Weekly, கத்தோலிக்கச் சேவை of Mathurai, in its October issue affirmed the ideas of Mr. Deivanayagam and wrote, 'No one has come forward to refute these so far'.

On Nov. 4th '72 Dr. Samuel Amirtham had a one-day Conference with his Seminarians and scholars of Mathurai and Mr. Deivanayagam. At present he is writing his seventh book, 'இயல்புடைய மூவர் யார்?' and it shows that the Christian Trinity is mentioned in couplet 41.

Madras.

V. D. SAHAYAM.



'LIFT UP YOUR EYES'

by S. L. PARMAR

CLS—ISPCK—LPH. 105 pp., Rs. 4.25

Sometimes the spiritual credentials of ecumenical leaders and of the Christian social thinkers of today are questioned by highly educated and active members of the Church in India, who ask whether they are 'practising' Christians at all or merely exponents of a social gospel? As though in reply to such questions we have recently had publications of books of meditations by leaders of Christian social thinking such as M. M. Thomas and D. T. Niles. And now Sam Parmar has written one more volume of the same nature which shows that the springs of social thought for these men are not in Marx or Dewey, but in the Bible and Christian theology.

When this has been said, however, it must also be said that their commitment to Christ does not limit their understanding of spirituality or Christian obedience—as it often does for many others—to personal piety which manifests itself as a preoccupation with the salvation of one's own soul. In other words their experience of Christ is not one thing and their social thinking another, which is incidental or ancillary to it, but the two are bound up together, each interpreting and giving reality to the other.

Parmar's *Lift Up Your Eyes* is a collection of twelve 'meditations', most of which, the author says, were 'first shared with different groups of participants at courses and conferences at the Ecumenical Institute, Geneva, during my three years' association with it'. They represent a spiritual seeking 'to discover the source of our being' when 'fears and anxieties generated by concern for society or communication problems can lead to a paralysis of will'

and we realise that 'without a basis of prayer, faith and personal commitment, our social involvement will be ineffective.'

Each of the chapters in the book is a statement of a human impasse, a word of God for it and a ray of understanding and hope by which the Christian can take his bearings and push on in the adventure of Christian engagement with the world. Each chapter also contains fascinating interpretations of texts, insights into deeper meanings and side-lights of contemporary illustrations. Each chapter must be read and pondered over in order to get the benefit of the thoughts and stimulus scattered over the whole book. All that may be attempted here is just a few examples to whet the desire to read the whole book.

The Bible reading for the title essay in the book is from the first Chapter of *Lamentations*. Starting from the situation of the Hebrew people which wrung the prophet's cry out of his anguish for the people, the author moves on to contemporary ecumenical thought and asks us to consider whether it is right to think that 'only after we have acquired self-understanding we will be strong enough to have a more effective witness'. Speaking about both revolutions and pseudo-revolutionaries (mostly Christian social reformers) he asks, 'Do we not realise that there has to be a counter-force superior to hatred and inhumanity?' And by way of illustrating that force he describes the *Dandi* march of Mahatma Gandhi.

One more example taken at random may be given. In *The Call and the Response* it is pointed out that the 'erosion of self' is a pronounced and characteristic element in the response to a call. But this is often obstructed by strong 'I-consciousness'. Parmar

analyses different forms of it and illustrates them with reference to the reactions of Moses to the call of God at the burning bush. In his interpretation, the rod of Moses signifies security and safety for himself while his people are suffering and so he must give it up. And, then, 'the staff is changed into a serpent—the inert made alive, a piece of wood transformed into a symbol of divinity'. Parmar comments, 'Your rod is your own support, but in God's hand it becomes the support for all your people. Now your seemingly inadequate qualities are imbued with tremendous potentiality'.

Parmar has a fine meditative style which consists very largely of imaginative writing. The following is an example:

An earthen pitcher, some sea water, the hot Indian sun, a mass of humanity, and the very foundations are shaken. Not the foundations of the British Empire alone. That would have been shaken in any case, for history was against it. No, not just that. Much more significant for us as a people was the shaking of our foundations: our lethargy, of passive submission to injustice, of lack of self-confidence . . . The 'naked fakir' of India and his humble retinue. How inadequate and vulnerable! But they helped a nation to recover its soul.

Parmar writes with a felicity of expression, making use of analogy and other vehicles of the meditative imagination. Preachers who think that Christianity or Christian living has any relation to the affairs of the modern world will find in the book material for several discourses and quotations to support points they might wish to make in their sermons.

D.A.T.

NOTICES

1973—THE YEAR FOR THE STUDY OF ISLAM

The Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies hereby appeals to the Churches in India to observe 1973 as the year for the study of Islam. The purpose for this special study is to make every church in India aware of the mission to Muslims. The basis of study shall be the H.M.I. Booklet, *Introduction to Islam*, prepared by the Rev. J. S. Moon and the Rev. I. H. Doubles. This booklet and other material can be had from the Director, Henry Martyn Institute:

HENRY MARTYN INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES,
P.O. Box 153, Hyderabad-500001,
A.P., India.

SITUATION VACANT

Resident Headmistress, CSI Clapton's Girls' High School, Jammalamadugu, Cuddapah Dist., A.P.

Wanted a resident headmistress for the CSI Clapton's Girl's High School, B.Ed. Assistant with seven years' teaching experience, age 35 to 50, Departmental Account Test passed and a member of the Church of South India. Please apply with full particulars to Dr. Stanley B. Vander Aarde, M.L.L. Hospital, Madanapalle, Chittoor Dist.

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BANGALORE-6.

South India.

The Three-Year Bachelor of Divinity Course (BD)

Applications are invited from candidates holding at least B.A., B.Sc., or B.Com. of a recognised University for the B.D. course commencing from 20th September. There is an entrance examination in English, General Knowledge, and Bible Knowledge, scheduled to be held on 15th and 16th June.

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The United Theological College,
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III.	4 January	-	28 February	1974
IV.	6 March	-	29 April	1974

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DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF DIVINITY (HONORIS CAUSA)

The Council of Serampore College on the recommendation of the Senate have resolved to confer the Degree of Doctor of Divinity (*Honoris Causa*) on the undermentioned dignitaries for their eminent contribution to the theological education and leadership given to the Churches in India :

The Most Rev. Eric Samuel Nasir was consecrated as Bishop in 1962. He served in Assam, and Amritsar as Bishop before he was appointed to Delhi. When the Church of North India was inaugurated in November 1970 the choice fell on him to be the first Moderator of the Church of North India. He was elected a member of the Senate of Serampore College in 1962 and again in 1969 for a second term.

The Most Rev. Mathews Mar Athanasius was consecrated as Bishop, in 1953, of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Kerala. He wrote a number of books in Malayalam and in English. He is now elected a successor and assistant to the Catholicos of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Kerala.

Rev. H. K. Moulton took his theological Tripos from Cambridge University and Post-graduate degree in teaching diploma at Manchester University. In 1932 he was appointed on the staff of United Theological College, Bangalore, as professor in New Testament and served there till 1957. He is the author of a number of books. He is at present a visiting professor at U.T.C., Bangalore.

The conferment of the Degree will take place at the forthcoming Convocation of Serampore College to be held at Tamil Nad Theological Seminary, Madurai, on February 3rd, 1973.

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I, C. E. Koshy, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(Sd.) C. E. KOSHY

Signature of Publisher.

Dated 1-3-1973.

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